

screen defensive redeployments. Quick smoke of longer durations is most effective in the defense, and this use of mortars has been neglected.

In the defense, too, a more traditional rearward mortar displacement plan is possible. Firing points can be selected and the details calculated ahead of time, but flexibility must still be paramount. While moving to cover the task force, the mortar sections must be prepared to fire hip shots as they move toward the rear.

The possibility that the task force will launch a counterattack also calls for forward-reaching mortar fire. The same precepts used in the offense are therefore applicable in the defense for covering such a move.

Commanders need to be willing to integrate heavy mortars into their fire support plans and to communicate the plans to their field artillery fire support officers (FSOs). Few in the artillery community understand mortars and their comparative effectiveness in terms of time. Mortars are both powerful and fast.

Artillery forward observers (FOs) and company FSOs prefer to use the 155mm and 207mm howitzers, which they believe will give the greatest effect. Experience at the NTC has shown, though, that few artillery battalions can deliver fire on

targets in less than 15 minutes from a call for fire, and this is often too late to do much good.

Close cooperation between the battalion FSO and the mortar platoon leader can solve this problem if the commander is supportive. Once the FSO realizes what a strong asset the heavy mortar platoon is, he can assign it missions that require an immediate response. A company FSO must also be convinced of the 107mm mortar's effectiveness.

The mortar platoon leader should actively participate in the battalion FSO's fire support rehearsals so that his unit's role can be discussed and integrated into the overall plan. Once the battalion fire support team and the mortar platoon have worked together several times, the mortars will never lack for missions.

It is also imperative that each mortar section be able to monitor the battalion command net. The information available on this net enables each section to make critical decisions regarding its movement and the urgency of its assigned missions. Again, constant contact between sections is essential.

Our current doctrine states that the mortar platoon leader will succeed the battalion FSO in the event he becomes a casualty, but I believe it should be the

senior company FSO who actually takes over that role in battle. Since he has access to a more sophisticated digital message device than the M23 mortar ballistic computer, he is better prepared and situated to interact with field artillery network. Only when the battle is over should the mortar platoon leader assume the duties of the battalion FSO if no replacement is readily available by then.

Finally, the battalion FSO should serve as the clearing house for all calls for fire, because only he can make a full evaluation of the fire support situation, and the mortar sections should receive their calls for fire from him. If necessary, of course, the company FSOs can call for mortar fire directly, but this option should be carefully reviewed during fire support rehearsals.

Heavy mortars are too important to be neglected. If our commanders come to realize how effective they are, and how fast they can be employed, heavy mortars will be allowed to take their appropriate place in any mechanized infantry battle.

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Mortar Platoon Matrix

LIEUTENANT CRAIG S. LINDERMAN

In a battalion task force equipped with M1 Abrams tanks and M2 Bradley fighting vehicles, there is now a mobility gap between these new vehicles and the less capable M106 mortar carrier. (See also "Improved Mortar Vehicle," by Sergeant Gilbert F. Warner, *INFANTRY*, July-August 1989, pages 17-19.)

Lessons learned at the National Train-

ing Center (NTC) indicate that the 4.2-inch heavy mortar platoon's ability to provide successful close indirect fire support to the task force has become increasingly difficult because of this handicap. The platoon, to accomplish its mission, must acquire greater agility and initiative in the planning and execution phases of an operation. A mortar platoon matrix

can help a platoon leader accomplish this goal.

In recent years, the execution matrix technique has become increasingly popular for detailing portions of a field order. The strength of the matrix is its ability to present large amounts of information clearly and concisely. The elements of the operation order that are especially

suiting to the matrix format include the scheme of maneuver, the fire support plan, and the obstacle and engineer execution plan.

Although this technique is most often used at company team level and above, a heavy mortar platoon leader will also find the matrix format ideal for presenting his own concept of operation to supplement his platoon order and guide in its execution.

A mortar platoon execution matrix should include the scheme of maneuver and the fire support plan at least, and should be readily applicable to both offensive and defensive situations. In addition, it should be event-driven so that planned platoon actions are clearly linked to the evolving task force plan.

The mortar platoon execution matrix that I propose meets all of these requirements and also includes a plan for controlling emergency administrative and logistical operations within the platoon.

This mortar platoon matrix consists of five rows labeled (from top to bottom) Section A, Section B, Priority of Fires, Priority Targets, and Checkpoints in Effect, as shown on the accompanying sample matrix. The first two rows refer to the platoon's individual gun sections and cover the planned scheme of maneuver for each. The third and fourth rows refer to the platoon's fire support plan. The last row establishes various checkpoints to be used for any emergency administrative or logistical activities that must be conducted.

The columns of the matrix are used to reflect different phases of the operation in sequence from start to finish. For simplicity, I define these phases by using established graphic control measures (phase lines, objectives, assembly areas, lines of departure, and the like). The number of columns therefore depends upon the number of graphic control measures defined in the task force operation order. (If necessary, the platoon leader may designate supplementary control measures to add greater detail to his platoon plan.)

The first two rows of the matrix, Sections A and B, detail the platoon leader's scheme of maneuver for the two gun sections as they progress through the oper-

	AA TO LD	LD TO PHASELINE 1	PHASELINE 1 TO PHASELINE 2	PHASELINE 2 TO PHASELINE 3	PHASELINE 3 TO OBJ. RED	OBJECTIVE RED	BEYOND PHASELINE 4
A SECTION	FP 1-1 5000	FP 1-2 4400	FP 1-2 4400	FP 1-3 5000	FP 1-3 5000	FP 1-3 5000	FP 1-3 5000
B SECTION	FP 2-1 5100	FP 2-1 5100	FP 2-2 5600	FP 2-2 5600	FP 2-3 6200	FP 2-3 6200	FP 2-4 6200
PRIORITY OF FIRES	Co A B	Co A Co A	Co A TmD	TmC TmC	Co B TmD	Co B TmD	Co B TmD
PRIORITY TARGETS	AB 1002 B	AB 1002 ① AB 1001	AB 1003 ② AB 1004	AB 1006 AB 1005	AB 1008 AB 1007	AB 1008 AB 1007	AB 1009 AB 1010
CHECKPOINTS IN EFFECT	1 1	2 1	2 3	4 3	4 5	4 5	4 6

NOTES:

- ① POSSIBLE ENEMY COUNTERATTACK ROUTE
- ② KNOWN ENEMY COMBAT OP
- ③ PLANNED OBSTACLE BREACH SITE

- HE/WP IN EFFECT
- HE DELAY IN EFFECT
- 400M SMOKE SCREEN
20-MINUTE DURATION

ation. Information that is relevant to this portion of the concept of operation includes each planned firing position and the associated direction of fire. The firing positions are recorded in the upper left corner of each box. These locations can be noted as actual grid coordinates or can refer to symbols found on the operation overlay. For example, FP 1-1 would refer to Firing Position 1-1, which is marked by the heavy mortar symbol on the overlay. The planned direction of fire is recorded in the lower right corner of each box and separated from the firing position location by a diagonal line.

The third and fourth rows of the matrix—Priority of Fires and Priority Targets—refer to the platoon fire support plan. Like the scheme of maneuver, the fire support plan must be made to reflect the evolving nature of the task force plan as it progresses. Normally, in a heavy platoon with two fire direction centers, each gun section can be allocated one priority fire assignment and one priority target mission. (In defensive operations, priority targets also include final protective fire missions.) Each box in these rows is divided by a diagonal line. The assignments and missions for Gun Section A are recorded in the upper left corner of

the box while the assignments and missions of Gun Section B are shown in the lower right corner.

The last row, Checkpoints in Effect, is used to define checkpoint locations for emergency resupply, friendly unit coordination, casualty evacuation, prisoner evacuation, and damaged vehicle collection within the platoon. In the event split section operations require the establishment of separate checkpoints, each box can be subdivided by a diagonal line similar to that in the boxes in the rows above.

The offensive execution matrix included here illustrates how a matrix of this kind is prepared. Because the offensive overlay includes tentative mortar firing positions identified along the unit's axis of advance, the mortar platoon execution matrix must support this plan.

The columns along the top of the matrix refer to the movement of friendly forces through the attack in relation to the established control measures. The actions of the mortar platoon—that is, displacement criteria and fire support requirements—are therefore driven by the actions of the task force.

For example, as the lead element of the task force crosses Phase Line 2, Gun Section A will reposition to FP 1-3 and shift

priority fires to Team C while Gun Section B will continue to fire from FP 2-2 and will shift priority fire to Team C as well. Both sections shift priority targets to AB 1006 and AB 1005 respectively. Finally, Section A would establish CP 4 as its new checkpoint in effect.

A defensive execution matrix would also reflect the plan as shown on the defensive overlay, but the displacement criteria and fire support requirements would now be driven by the actions of the enemy forces and not by those of the friendly forces.

It is important to note that this matrix format is flexible and can be used in circumstances other than purely offensive and defensive situations. An offensive execution matrix, for example, can be modified and used in planning for the possibility of a meeting engagement or

an enemy counterattack. Likewise, a defensive execution matrix can be modified to account for a planned friendly counterattack. For greater detail on the platoon leader's plan, notes referring to different portions of the matrix can be added in the margin.

In a combat environment dominated by the fast pace of mechanized warfare, the mission of the heavy mortar platoon has become increasingly complex. This mortar platoon execution matrix will enable a platoon leader to make the most of his planning time and help him execute the platoon plan in battle.

My experience with this matrix has demonstrated that it not only saves valuable time but also helps greatly during the oral presentation of the order to subordinates. A gun section leader who has a copy of the task force graphics, a target

list, and a completed mortar platoon execution matrix has everything he needs to execute his mission of providing close indirect fire support to the unit. This is especially critical when his communications go bad and he must make decisions based on incomplete information.

A heavy mortar platoon leader who uses this matrix in his orders process is better able to plan and prepare for his mission. In addition, it will be valuable to his subordinates in executing these plans and will greatly contribute to the overall success of the platoon's mission in combat.

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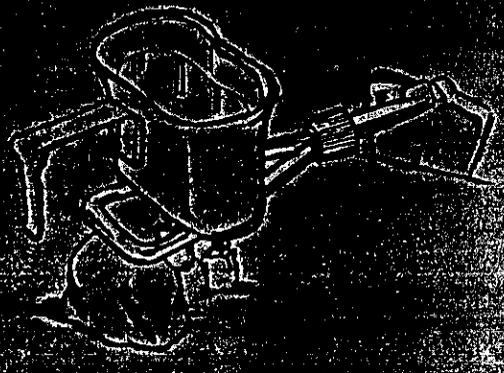
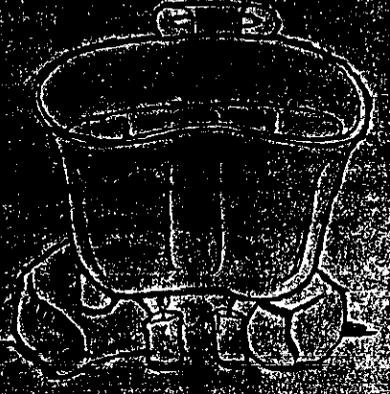
SWAP SHOP



CANDID BEHAVIOR

While attending the Columbus Army Terminal School this year, I learned a way to deal with an enemy who attacks from behind using a candle. The candle is used to burn the enemy's feet. The candle is lit and held in the hand. The candle is then held over the enemy's feet. The candle is then held over the enemy's feet. The candle is then held over the enemy's feet.

mean the other. If the ground is too soft to dig in to do this, some things will work. The candle is used to burn the enemy's feet. The candle is then held over the enemy's feet. The candle is then held over the enemy's feet.



Commander Gerald Linderman, while attending the Signal Officer School at Fort Gordon, Virginia, is the Linderman Heroe. Linderman's name appeared in the March/April 1988 issue of INFANTRY (pages 15-16).